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Applicability: **All DDSN State Employees**

This directive establishes the Employee Performance Management System (EPMS) for the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs in accordance with the Employee Performance Management System criteria approved by the Budget and Control Board. The language used in this policy directive does not create an employment contract between the employee and DDSN. DDSN reserves the right to revise the contents of this policy in whole or in part at any time.

I. PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the EPMS is to increase the overall efficiency of the Department by helping each employee to improve his/her own performance. Other important purposes include:

- A. Identifying employees who have potential for promotion;
- B. providing information to employees, supervisors and managers to use in making work-related decisions;
- C. helping employees use their full potential in carrying out their job responsibilities;
- D. identifying training needs;
- E. maintaining a documented history of the employee's performance;
- F. encouraging continued growth and development of all employees;
- G. providing documentation to support recommendations for salary increases, promotions, reassignments, demotions and dismissals;
- H. assisting management in assigning work and delegating responsibility based on a mutual understanding of the employee's skills and abilities; and
- I. enhancing other personnel administration components such as selection and classification.

II. STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Components of the EPMS

The components of the EPMS are the planning stage, ongoing performance management, and the

evaluation stage. Each employee should have a planning stage conducted at the beginning of each rating period. During the planning stage, the performance expectations should be determined, communicated to the employee, and documented on the appraisal form. Ongoing performance management involves continuous communication between the employee and supervisor throughout the year, as well as the management of substandard performance. Finally, the evaluation stage encompasses the completion of the appraisal document and its communication to the employee prior to the end of the review period.

B. Levels of Performance

There shall be four levels of performance.

1. **Substantially Exceeds Requirements** - work that is characterized by exemplary accomplishments throughout the rating period; performance that is considerably and consistently above the criteria of the job function. Written justification is required when this rating is given.
2. **Exceeds Performance Requirements** - work that is above the criteria of the job function throughout the rating period.
3. **Meets Performance Requirements** - work that meets the criteria of the job function.
4. **Below Performance Requirements** - work that fails to meet the criteria of the job function. Written justification is required when this rating is given.

Performance characteristics shall be given a rating of acceptable (meets requirements)/unacceptable (fails to meet requirements).

C. Planning Stage

There shall be a discussion (planning stage) with the employee at the beginning of each rating period of performance expectations (job functions, performance characteristics and objectives) for the next rating period. The reviewing officer and the supervisor shall discuss the requirements for the coming year prior to the planning stage.

D. Job Functions

The supervisor and the employee shall determine the job functions (which include job duties and success criteria), performance characteristics and objectives that shall be evaluated at the end of the review period. The statement outlining the job function should include descriptive information about the performance expectations (success criteria) of the supervisor. The descriptive statement should specify the expectations of the supervisor for the employee to meet performance requirements. Each job function shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the four levels of performance. The job duties and success criteria shall be determined by a review of the employee's position description (PD). If the PD is not up-to-date, or if there is no PD, one shall be prepared and submitted for approval. In those instances where the supervisor and employee cannot agree upon the requirements, the supervisor's decision shall be final. It shall be

mandatory for all supervisors (raters) to be evaluated on the timely completion of each employee's performance appraisal.

E. Success Criteria

The development of success criteria is required for all positions within the Agency. These success criteria should be based on what the duties of the positions reasonably and legitimately require in order for an employee to attain a "meets performance requirements" appraisal.

F. Probationary Period

Each new employee, in probationary status, shall be rated prior to the completion of a one year probationary period. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default and obtain covered status as a State employee and permanent status in the classification. The probationary period may not be extended. If an employee is not performing satisfactorily during the probationary period, the employee must be terminated before becoming a covered employee. Until an employee has completed the probationary period and has a "meets performance requirements" or higher overall rating on the employee's evaluation, the employee has no grievance rights under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act; therefore, a supervisor is not required to follow the "Substandard Performance Process" to terminate a probationary employee. Performance appraisals for probationary employees must be forwarded to the Human Resource Management (HRM) office at least 30 days prior to the performance review date. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new review period.

G. Annual Performance Reviews

All employees shall be given an annual appraisal no more than 90 calendar days prior to the employee's performance review date. If an employee does not receive an appraisal prior to the performance review date, the employee shall receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new period. A covered employee may not be issued an overall "below performance requirements" appraisal at any time during the annual review period without following the "Substandard Performance Process."

H. Trial Periods

Each covered employee who has been demoted, promoted or reclassified shall be appraised prior to the completion of a 6-month trial period in the position. The performance review date marks the beginning of a new performance period. If an employee does not receive a performance appraisal prior to the 6-month trial performance review date, the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default and obtain permanent status in the new classification. Once an employee has completed a successful trial period and obtained permanent status in a classification, the employee retains permanent status in the classification throughout the employee's continuous service. The 6-month trial period may be extended up to 90 calendar days upon written notice to the employee prior to the end of the 6-month trial period.

The "Substandard Performance Process" is not required to demote or downwardly reclass an employee in trial status to the same classification or a classification in an equal or higher pay band from which promoted, if the demotion or reclassification occurs within the trial period. An employee in trial status may not grieve such demotion. The employee in trial status may not be terminated or demoted to a class in a lower pay band than that from which promoted for performance reasons, without following the "Substandard Performance Process".

I. Performance Characteristics

General and management performance characteristics and definitions are listed on Attachments 1 and 2.

Each performance characteristic shall be defined in the planning stage and rated as "acceptable" or "unacceptable" in the evaluation stage. The performance characteristics section shall be used as a communication tool to emphasize those performance characteristics that are important to success in performing the job functions and objectives included in the planning document. The performance characteristics section shall not be weighted in the determination of the overall performance rating.

It shall be mandatory for all managers and supervisors to be rated on the performance characteristic of "promoting equal opportunity". (Promoting equal opportunity includes working towards agency affirmative action goals in such areas as hiring, promotion, or placement; level of personal and organizational commitment to equal opportunity; progress toward achieving a fully integrated and representative work force; and contribution toward minority programs and other social/economic equal opportunity goals.)

J. Objectives

Objectives shall be optional for all employees. An objective shall be included when the employee is assigned a special, non-recurring project or assignment that is not included on the employee's position description. Success criteria shall be developed for each objective during the planning stage. Each objective shall be rated in the evaluation stage based on the four levels of performance

K. Training

Training shall be mandatory for all employees in regard to the performance appraisal system. New employees shall be briefed on the performance appraisal system during their orientation session(s).

III PROCEDURES

- A. All performance appraisals shall be made in writing by the employee's supervisor (Rater) who has first hand experience or knowledge of the work being performed and reviewed by the next higher level supervisor (Reviewer), unless the appraiser is the State Director for Disabilities and Special Needs, prior to the appraisal being discussed with the employee. The higher level supervisor may attach additional comments to the appraisal,

and in the attachment may take exception to any of the supervisor's appraisal points; however, the reviewer may not change the appraisal completed by the supervisor. The appraisal must bear the signature of the rater, the reviewer and the employee, if possible. If an employee will not sign an appraisal, a notation shall be made on the performance appraisal of this and, if possible, witnessed by one signature.

- B. All performance appraisals shall become a permanent part of the employee's official personnel file. Upon request the HRM Office shall furnish the employee with a copy of the performance appraisal with copies of all pertinent attachments.
- C. "Unofficial" or additional performance appraisals may be given at any time when the performance no longer meets performance requirements, if there has been substantial change made to the position the employee is in, or when the responsibilities of the employee have changed dramatically. An informal meeting at the midpoint of the review period is strongly recommended to promote open communication between the employee and the supervisor.
- D. In order to ensure that employees are given adequate notice of their substandard performance, along with the opportunity to improve such performance prior to the formal evaluation, the following procedures shall be followed regarding substandard performance.
 - 1. A supervisor shall issue a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance" prior to issuing a "below performance requirements" rating to a covered employee. If during the performance period an employee is considered "below performance requirements," in any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance, the supervisor shall provide the employee with a written "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance." The warning notice shall provide for an improvement period of no less than 30 days and no more than 120 days. The warning notice may be issued at any time during the review period. Ordinarily, the warning period may not extend beyond the employee's review date. However, if the warning notice is issued less than 30 days before the employee's review date, the review date would roll forward a day for each day the warning notice is in effect. The supervisor and employee should participate in drafting a work improvement plan. The work improvement plan should include a list of ways to improve the deficiencies and other appropriate performance related recommendations. In those instances where the supervisor and employee cannot agree upon the content of the work improvement plan, the supervisor's decision shall be final.
 - 2. During the warning period, the employee and the supervisor shall have regularly scheduled meetings during which they shall discuss the employee's progress. Documentation is required to verify that these counseling sessions were held. Copies of this documentation shall be placed in the employee's official personnel file and given to the employee upon request.

3. If the employee's performance is rated "meets performance requirements" or above, on all essential job functions/objectives, which significantly impact performance, noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, employment shall continue. If the employee is rated "below performance requirements," on any essential job function or objective which significantly impacts performance as noted in the warning notice by the end of the warning period, the employee shall be removed from the position immediately (i.e., terminated, reassigned, demoted).
4. Once a time frame for improving substandard performance has been given, the employee must receive a written appraisal prior to the end of the warning period or the employee will receive a "meets performance requirements" rating by default.
5. If an employee has been issued two warning notices within a 365-day period and performance drops to a substandard level on any essential job function/objective, which significantly impacts performance for a third time within a 365-day period, the employee shall be removed from the position upon the third recurrence of such substandard performance by issuing the "below performance requirement" appraisal. A warning notice is not required on the third occurrence.
6. An unofficial review (meaning this entire process) may be initiated any time the supervisor believes that the employee's performance is below standard.

E. An official warning notice of substandard performance shall include the following:

1. The notice shall be in writing, addressed to the employee, labeled as a "Warning Notice of Substandard Performance," and signed by the employee (witnessed, if employee will not sign).
2. The notice shall list the job function(s) and/or objective(s) included on the employee's planning document that are considered "below performance requirements," with an explanation of the deficiencies for each job function and/or objective.
3. The notice shall include the time period for improvement and the consequences if no improvement is noted (i.e., termination, demotion, reassignment).
4. The notice shall include a plan for meetings to discuss employee progress during the warning period.
5. A copy of the notice shall be given to the employee and placed in the employee's official personnel file.

F. Appraisals must be forwarded to the HRM office at least 30 calendar days prior to the review date.

G. Performance ratings not related to salary decreases based on performance are not considered grievable matter under the State Employee Grievance Procedure Act.

IV EPMS FORM

The statewide EPMS form, Attachment 3, shall be used for all employees.

Wayne D. Blanton
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(Originator)

Stanley J. Butkus, Ph.D.
State Director
(Approved)

Please view the attachments at the bottom:

Employee Performance Management System

General Performance Characteristics

Communication Ability - the effectiveness with which the employee presents accurate information both verbally and in writing.

Relationships with Others - the extent to which the employee establishes positive relationships with co-workers (for example, being a good team worker, being tactful and courteous with co-workers).

Ability to Work Without Supervision - the extent to which the employee can work by himself/herself; requiring very little supervision and being self-sufficient in assuming the duties of the job.

- Accuracy of Work - the degree to which the employee makes mistakes or errors that require correction.

- Appearance - the appearance of the employee at work; cleanliness, grooming, neatness and appropriateness of dress for the job.

- Cooperation - the extent to which the employee cooperates with supervisors, associates and those for whom work is performed.

- Dependability - the extent to which the employee can be relied upon to meet work schedules and fulfill job responsibilities and commitments.

- Use of Work Time - how effectively and efficiently the employee uses his/her time to accomplish his/her job tasks (for example, does not wait until the last minute to work on important projects).

- Meeting Schedules - the extent to which the employee efficiently completes his/her work and effectively meets deadlines.

- Punctuality - the extent to which the employee is prompt in reporting to work and assignments/appointments at the specified time.

- Initiative - the extent to which the employee works ahead based on his/her own judgment without waiting to be told.

- Adaptability - the extent to which the employee can adapt to job or organizational change.

Willingness to Learn - the extent to which the employee wants to learn about his/her job and asks intelligent questions about the job.

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Safety - the extent to which the employee follows established safety practices and corrects unsafe work practices on the job.

- Favorable Job Attitude - the extent to which the employee displays interest and enthusiasm for his/her work and takes pride in a job well done.

- Job Knowledge - the extent to which the employee knows the details of the job and follows the job procedures to the letter.

- Quantity of Work - the extent to which the employee produces an amount of acceptable work in order to meet schedules over which he/she has control.

- Quality of Work - the extent to which the employee neatly, thoroughly, and accurately completes job assignments according to established standards of quality.

- Attendance - concerns whether the employee is at work each day.

- Relationship with the Public - the extent to which the employee establishes good relationships with the public (for example, being courteous and helpful with the public).

Judgment - the quality of the work-related decisions made by the employee.

Employee Performance Management System

Selected Management Characteristics

Management Functions

- Planning - The process of making assumptions about the future and gathering facts and opinion to visualize and to achieve the proposed activities is planning. It involves: establishing objectives, communicating the objectives, surveying resources, establishing policies, choosing alternatives and taking action, creating procedures and rules, establishing budgets, establishing timetables and deciding on standards.

- Organizing - this refers to the process of arranging people, tasks and resources in the most orderly and efficient way. Organizing involves: structuring or grouping employees and their activities, assigning specific work to specific groups or individuals and deciding on the chain of command, span of control and delegation of authority.

- Controlling - this essentially involves monitoring the implementation of agreed organizational plans. Controlling involves: establishing standards, measuring performance against these standards and correcting deviations from standards and plans.

- Motivating - a manager motivates by creating an organizational environment or climate in which employees can perform to the best of their ability. Employee motivation is affected by: the work itself, a sense of achievement received from performing the work, recognition received for work performed, the possibility of advancement and growth and a sense of trust and responsibility.

- Developing - this refers to ongoing learning and growth both for the manager and for the employees. Developing involves: continuing education and training to stay abreast of the current state of the art in one's field, making projections based on current trends, determining learning and training needs and selecting appropriate learning activities.

- Promoting Equal Opportunity* - includes working towards agency affirmative action goals in such areas as hiring, promotion, or placement, level of personal and organizational commitment to equal opportunity, progress toward achieving a fully integrated and representative work force and contribution toward minority contracting programs and other social/economic equal opportunity goals.

Command of Basic Facts - successful managers have a command of such basic facts as goals and plans (long and short term), product or service knowledge, who's who in the organization, the rules and relationships between various departments, their own job, and what's expected of them. If they don't store all this information, they know where to get it when they need it.

Relevant Professional Knowledge - this category includes technical knowledge, for example, technology relevant to results required, constituency building techniques, engineering

knowledge, relevant legislation, sources of finance, and knowledge of basic management principles and theories such as planning, organizing and controlling.

- Continuing Sensitivity to Events - managers vary in the degree to which they can sense what is happening in a particular situation. Successful managers are relatively sensitive to events and can tune in to what's going on around them. They are perceptive and open to information - "hard" information, such as figures and facts and "soft" information, such as the feelings of other people. Managers with this sensitivity are able to respond appropriately to situations as they arise.

- Analytical, Problem-Solving and Decision/Judgment-Making Skills - the manager is very much concerned with making decisions. Sometimes these can be made using simple logic. Other decisions call for the ability to weigh pros and cons in what is basically a very uncertain or ambiguous situation, calling for a high level of judgment or even intuition. The manager must therefore develop judgment-making skills, including the ability to cope with ambiguity and uncertainty, striking a balance between the necessity at times to be guided by subjective feelings without ignoring objective logic.

- Social Skills and Abilities - one definition of management often cited is "getting things done through other people". This definition may be inadequate, but it does point to one of the key features of the manager's job - it requires interpersonal skills. The successful manager develops a range of abilities that are essential in such activities; communicating, delegating, negotiation, resolving conflict, persuasion selling, using and responding to authority.

- Personal Resilience - the manager's job involves a degree of emotional stress and strain, which arises as a natural consequence of working in situations involving authority, leadership, power, interpersonal conflict, meeting targets and deadlines, all within a framework of some uncertainty and ambiguity. Successful managers must cope with this. Resilient means that they feel the stress (they don't become thick-skinned and insensitive) but are able to cope with it by maintaining self-control and by giving to some extent.

- Creativity - by creativity we mean the ability to come up with unique new responses to situations, and to have the breadth of insight to recognize and take up useful new approaches. It involves not only having new ideas but also having the ability to recognize a good idea when it comes from someone else.

*All supervisors must be rated on this management function.